



by Edmund Schlink, another Lutheran theologian. One also wonders why the editor introduced a short chapter of less than four pages by L. Kaufmann, "Ecumenical Encounter at the Edge of the Council." It adds very little to the meaning of the volume. Thanks to cross references to other articles in this compilation of essays as well as to other books by Cullmann, the reader has a better opportunity to understand the author's thinking. The minor typographical errors (as on pp. 23, 44, 50, 108) do not detract from the interest of the volume. Its particular value lies in its genuine contribution to the contemporary Roman Catholic-Protestant dialogue.

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Hatt, Harold E., *Encountering Truth, A New Understanding of How Revelation Yields Doctrine*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966. 208 pp. \$ 4.50.

Until a few decades ago men of varying theological perspectives were agreed that revelation was essentially the transmission of knowledge or the affirmation of truths. Everybody from scholastics to deists, from pietists to rationalists, operated within this so-called "information barrier." Drawing upon the I-Thou encounter as a central category in its comprehension of the Christian faith, encounter theology has introduced a new chapter in the history of the interpretation of revelation. It seeks to elaborate the understanding of revelation as lying beyond the "information barrier." Revelation is now understood to be the personal self-disclosure of God to man, not the impartation of truths about God. Doctrines are described as the result of later rational reflection upon the self-manifestation of God and as distorting the encounter with God, since they belong to the sphere of I-It rather than I-Thou.

Hatt's thesis is that neither encounter theology nor propositional theology provides a clear and satisfactory concept of the relation between doctrine and revelation. Underlining the strengths and weaknesses in both, the author—a professor of theology and philosophy at the Graduate Seminary, Phillips University—seeks an interpretation that preserves the positive values that each has to offer.

Therefore he first investigates encounter theology as represented by Martin Buber and Emil Brunner, and the concept of revelation that emerges from it. His next step is to evaluate conceptual theology as presented by two American fundamentalists, J. Gresham Machen and B. B. Warfield, and one European orthodox theologian, Abraham Kuyper. Their view is rejected as inadequate because Hatt considers its concept of infallibility untenable. He concludes that a more adequate understanding of revelation is achieved by an emendation of encounter theology to include I-It elements in the divine-human encounter.

In other words, encounter theology does not go far enough in its understanding of the role of propositional elements in revelation, and propositional theology goes too far. It would seem, therefore, that what is needed is an explanation which includes propositional elements within encounter, without going to the extreme of affirming that propositions are revealed.

This explains why, over against such theologians as Paul van Buren and Schubert Ogden, for instance, who contend that theological use of analogical language is meaningless and that all talk about God is really talk about man, Hatt remains convinced that the concept of encounter between human beings points, in some sense, toward divine-human encounter. Encounter, he argues, is not simply a process of relating to another person, but of relating and interpreting the relation. Like encounter with man, encounter with God incorporates I-It elements within a basic I-Thou relation.

In this reviewer's opinion, however, no serious attempt has been made to develop Machen's, Warfield's and Kuyper's views in depth, nor to take serious account of their numerous interpreters or of more recent conservative theological literature. One finds only casual references to Merrill C. Tenney, G. C. Berkouwer, James I. Packer, Gordon H. Clark, Carl F. H. Henry and Paul Jewett. It is surprising that no mention is made of Bernard Ramm's major work, *Special Revelation and the Word of God*. No answer, in fact, has been offered to Ramm's thesis that the knowledge of God is not only a making known but also a saying. Moreover, the contributions of Machen, Warfield, and Kuyper seem not to have been fully apprehended by Hatt. This reviewer has never considered their views, as the author does, as predominantly abstract, nor does he think they insist, in the way Hatt contends, that Christian knowledge must be necessarily in a certain doctrinal form for faith to happen. For them the concept of faith as intellectual assent leaves room for trust in a person. There is no incompatibility here between a vital Christian experience and a strong emphasis on revealed doctrines.

Hatt's conclusion is that an existential, personal type of knowledge is present in an encounter with God. Although not infallibly communicated by divine fiat, but received through human interpretation of divine confrontation, this knowledge is later elaborated into doctrine. This is Hatt's way of saying that "knowledge about" is essentially a part of "knowledge of" God. If his conclusions prove less conclusive to others than they are to him, his book at least deserves fair consideration as a serious, conscientious piece of work, evincing both industry and originality.